



# NEWS RELEASE

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## ***SMALL BUSINESSES HELP PUT JOHN GLENN IN SPACE AGAIN***

WASHINGTON – Whether you’re aboard the space shuttle Discovery or at the Kennedy Space Center intent on getting a close look at today’s historic launch, you’re benefiting from the expertise of small businesses assisted by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Small businesses play an important role in National Aeronautics and Space Administration programs as contractors, subcontractors and researchers.

Two of the shuttle’s payloads feature elements that were developed using funds from the SBA’s Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program, and one of the space facility’s primary viewing areas was recently refurbished by a participant in SBA’s 8(a) business development program. In fact, the 8(a) firm, Rush Construction of Titusville, Fla., did such a good job, the space center recently honored the company with a contracting award, designating them the facility’s Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year.

**“The nation’s eyes are fixed on today’s launch of the Discovery shuttle and the contributions of Senator John Glenn,”** said SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez. **“I’m proud that small businesses are playing key roles in this very important mission.”** Administrator Alvarez was in Florida to view the launch.

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The SBIR program factors into two of the four primary payloads now aboard Discovery. One payload relates to the Hubble Space Telescope and involves a cryogenic cooling system. Creare, Inc. of Hanover, NH, developed a turboalternator used in the process as part of an SBIR project. Another payload experiment, this one looking at heat transfer using a capillary loop system, essentially reduces the temperature of fluids circulating around technical equipment. The system was created in part by Cullimore & Ring Technologies, Inc., of Littleton, Colo., using an SBIR funding award.

Through the 16-year-old SBIR program, small firms compete to provide innovative solutions to the expressed needs of various government agencies. Studies have shown that the SBIR initiative produces some of the government's most highly regarded research.

The program is administered by the SBA in conjunction with the 10 federal agencies with the largest research and development budgets. The program currently accounts for more than \$1 billion per year in federal research and development funds.

Rush Construction, which joined the SBA's 8(a) business development program in 1990, was asked to meet an aggressive demolition and renovation schedule for the Kennedy Space Center's Launch Control Center #4, the largest room facing the space shuttle launch pad. Rush, as the prime contractor, completed the project within a five-month span, finishing the work in September 1998.

The SBA's 8(a) program, named for a section of the Small Business Act, is a business development initiative that helps socially and economically disadvantaged American citizens gain access to the economic mainstream.

Through the 8(a) program, the SBA has helped thousands of firms succeed, providing employment to nearly 180,000 American workers. Above all, the 8(a) program has provided an avenue for disadvantaged Americans to achieve entrepreneurial success and contribute to the strength and vigor of our economy.

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